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The Linguaphone Institute

Hindi Course

Introduction to the Devanagari alphabet

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The Linguaphone Institute

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Introduction

Hindi is written in the Devanagari script.

The purpose of this book is to teach you to recognise and write the letters of the Devanagari alphabet. The book should be used in conjunction with the recordings of the sounds of Hindi. When you have satisfactorily completed the exercises in this book you will be in a position to begin reading the text of the course in Devanagari.

However, it is not absolutely necessary for you to complete your study of this book before starting to work on the lessons of the course. If you wish, you can begin the Introductory lessons immediately and progress into the course using the recordings, the transliterated version of the Hindi text, and the Handbook. While you are studying this book you can thus, at the same time, be learning to speak and understand the language. As you progress through this book you will find that you are recognising more of the Devanagari script of the lessons, and eventually you will be able to tackle them using the transliteration as a check only.

A word of warning here about the transliterated version of the Hindi text. We have provided this as an aid to learning the language: it will enable you to start the course and to make progress with the language while you are still learning the Devanagari script. It is there to provide you with a check while you are still not completely confident with the script; but it must not become a permanent crutch, since there is no alternative alphabet to the Hindi one: you might see some road signs, names of shops, etc. in India using a transliterated alphabet, but you will never see books or newspapers printed using this system. So, if you want to be able to read and write Hindi, as well as to speak it and understand it when it is spoken, then you must master the Devanagari alphabet.

Some preliminary points

1 The most striking characteristic of the Devanagari script is the heavy line across the top of each letter. Like English, and the other languages using the Roman alphabet, it is written and read from left to right.

2 There are fifty-four letters in the alphabet: ten clear vowels and three vowel sounds, thirty-three consonants, and the rest are compound consonants, including those borrowed from Arabic and Persian sounds.

3 In general there is one letter or sign for each vowel and one letter for each consonant, so the spelling is regular and simple. Thus, although the number of symbols is fairly large, Hindi is comparatively easy to write and read because words are spelt almost exactly as they are pronounced.

4 There are no capital letters in Hindi.

5 The printed and the handwritten styles do not differ *in form*, but handwriting of course, differs from person to person. In this course, the aim is to teach you one simple, clear style of lettering. There is *no distinction between printing and cursive handwriting* as there is in English.

6 The alphabet 'hangs', as it were, from the top line. Letters forming one word are grouped together by the top line, drawn from left to right. Even one letter words have a line. On lined paper it is easier to use the line as a guiding line, and to hang the letters from it, rather than to write between the lines.

E.g.:–

(a) क़लम (qalama)

(b) क़लम (qalama)

(a) is more natural and neater than (b), and hence used most of the time for writing.

How to use this book

We shall present the letters to you in the same order in which their sounds appear on the recordings. Before you start to write a letter, listen to its sound, and then as you practise writing the letter say the sound to yourself. In this way you will associate letter and sound from the beginning.

In the tables illustrating the forms of the letters you will see that five lines have been ruled in: these are to guide you in positioning the letters correctly. We show you how to build up the letter, stroke by stroke, until you have achieved its complete form.

The exercises are designed to teach you to form the shape of the letter, to associate it with its sound, to combine different letters and to recognise them by associating them with their transliterated equivalent. You should imitate

the sound of each letter several times as you copy it. Thus writing, reading and pronunciation exercises are combined.

It is important that you should complete all the exercises in one section or group and can get all the answers correct without referring to the tables or the key before going on to the next section.

Equivalent sounds given in romanised script are only approximate, since the Devanagari alphabet contains many sounds totally unfamiliar to the English speaker. The alphabet and the sounds are presented as simply as possible without going into technicalities of phonetics. When you listen to the alphabet and its sounds on the recording you should note carefully the romanised letter (or symbol) used for each sound. This will help you to pronounce a sound in the same way when you next come across it. You will find that as you become more familiar with the Devanagari script you will rely less on the romanised version.

The words used as examples in this book are all taken from the text. They are used here for pronunciation, writing and recognition practice, and at this stage you do not have to remember them as essential vocabulary.

The vowels (svara)

On the recordings (record 1 side A or cassette 3 track A) of the sounds section (hindii-varNamaalaa) you will hear the thirteen vowel sounds first. We give you the Devanagari forms of the vowels in tables 1-3, and they are also printed on page 5 of the Textbook. These printed (and written) forms are used when the vowels appear in isolation or at the beginning or end of words.

Table 1 (the first three vowels)

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation	strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
1 2 3 4	अ	a	1 2 3 4	आ	aa
1 2	इ	i			

Exercise 1

a. Listen to each sound and trace the shape of the appropriate letter following the arrows as shown in the table.

b. Now practise writing each letter in the spaces given in the table, saying the sound to yourself as you do so.

c. Continue practising on a separate sheet of paper until you are satisfied that you are forming the shape correctly, and associating the correct sound with the letter. Check with the recording again to make sure of the sound.

Table 2 (the next 5 vowels)

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation	strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
ई	ई	ii	उ	उ	u
ऊ	ऊ	uu	ऋ	ऋ	ri
ए	ए	ee			

Exercise 2

Follow the same procedure as you did for exercise 1.

Exercise 3

Without looking at the tables, give the transliterated equivalents of the following

1 अ 3 इ 5 ऋ 7 आ

2 ए 4 ऊ 6 उ 8 ई

Check your answers against the key.

Table 3

Here are the last 5 vowels

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation	strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
ऐ	ऐ	ai	ओ	ओ	oo
औ	औ	au	अं	अं	ā
अः	अः	H			

Exercise 4

Follow the same procedure as you did for exercise 1.

Exercise 5

Without looking at the tables, give the transliterated equivalents of the following

1 अ 4 इ 7 आ 10 ऊ 13 ई

2 अं 5 अः 8 ओ 11 उ

3 ऋ 6 ए 9 ऐ 12 औ

Check your answers against the key.

Exercise 6

Without looking at the tables, write the Devanagari letters which correspond to the following transliterations.

1	**au**	4	**ri**	7	**a**	10	**i**	13	**ā**
2	**ii**	5	**uu**	8	**ee**	11	**oo**		
3	**u**	6	**H**	9	**ai**	12	**aa**		

Check your answers against the key.

The vowel signs

Twelve of the thirteen vowels are represented by signs when they occur anywhere in a word except at the beginning or end. In tables 4, 4a and 5 we give you the signs with the vowels they represent and we show you the position they take – that is, whether they are placed before, after, beneath or above a consonant. Their sounds are the same as those of the vowels they represent, so that we have not recorded them again.

Table 4 (here are six of the vowel signs)

The black squares represent consonants, so that you can see where the signs are placed in relation to them. Each vowel sign can appear with any consonant, but it always appears in the same position, whatever the consonant.

N.B. The top line stroke is not written separately after writing the vowel sign, but is a part of the line for the whole word; this line is drawn when the whole word is complete.

strokes of sign	position of sign	equivalent vowel	trans-liter-ation	strokes of sign	position of sign	equivalent vowel	trans-liter-ation
		आ	aa			इ	i
		ई	ii			उ	u
		ऊ	uu			ऋ	ri

Exercise 7

Follow the same procedure as you did for exercise 1.

Table 4a

There are two exceptions to the rule concerning the position of vowel signs in relation to consonants. The consonant र takes the signs ु and ू in its centre rather than below it. Table 4a shows you the exact position. Practise this in the space provided and then on a separate sheet of paper.

sign	position	equivalent vowel	trans-liter-ation	sign	position	equivalent vowel	trans-liter-ation
ु	रु	उ	u	ू	रू	ऊ	uu

Table 5

Here are the other six vowel signs

strokes of sign	position of sign	equivalent vowel	trans-liter-ation	strokes of sign	position of sign	equivalent vowel	trans-liter-ation
ृ 1	ृ	ए	ee	ै 1 2	ै	ऐ	ai
ॊ 1 2	ॊ	ओ	oo	ौ 1 2 3	ौ	औ	au
ँ 1	ँ	अं	ā	ः 1 2	ः	अः	H

The vowel अ has no corresponding sign, but its sound is implied with the consonants.

Exercise 8

Follow the same procedure as you did for exercise 1.

Exercise 9

Write the vowel signs equivalent to these vowels

1 आ 4 ई 7 ऋ 10 औ

2 अं 5 इ 8 ऊ 11 ओ

3 अः 6 ए 9 ऐ 12 उ

Check your answers against the key.

Exercise 10

Write the vowels and vowel signs which correspond to the following transliterations

1 **aa** 4 **ai** 7 **a** 10 **ee** 13 **i**

2 **ii** 5 **oo** 8 **u** 11 **uu**

3 **ri** 6 **au** 9 **ā** 12 **H**

Check your answers against the key.

The consonants (vyanjan)

Thirty-five consonants are recorded after the vowels, and we present them here in the order in which you hear them; you will also see them printed in the Textbook on page 5 after the vowel signs.

Table 6

Here are the first five consonants, representing the velar sounds (sounds made with the back of the tongue, near the back of the roof of the mouth).

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation	strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
1 2 3	क	k	1 2 3 4	ख	kh
1 2 3	ग	g	1 2 3	घ	gh
1 2 3	ङ	ā			

Exercise 11

Follow the same procedure as you did for exercise 1.

Table 7

These five consonants represent the palatal sounds (sounds made with the front of the tongue near the roof of the mouth).

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation	strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
1 2 3	च	c	1 2 3	छ	ch
1 2 3	ज	j	1 2 3	झ	jh
1 2 3 4	ञ	—			

Exercise 12

Follow the same procedure as you did for exercise 1.

Exercise 13

Without looking at the tables, give the transliterated equivalents of the following

1 क 3 त्र 5 ज 7 ङ 9 ख

2 च 4 ग 6 घ 8 छ 10 झ

Check your answers against the key.

Table 8

These five consonants represent the Lingual sounds (sounds made chiefly with the tongue).

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation	strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
1 2	ट	T	1 2	ठ	TH
1 2	ड	D	1 2	ढ	DH
1 2 3 4	ण	N			

Exercise 14

Follow the same procedure as you did for exercise 1.

Table 9

These seven consonants represent the dental sounds (sounds made with the tip of the tongue against the upper front teeth).

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation	strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
	त	t		थ	th
	द	d		ध	dh
	न	n		ड़	R
	ढ	RH			

Exercise 15

Follow the same procedure as you did for exercise 1.

Exercise 16

Without looking at the tables, give the transliterated equivalents of the following

1	ढ़	4	न	7	द	10	ध
2	ड़	5	त	8	ण	11	ड
3	ट	6	ठ	9	ढ	12	थ

Check your answers against the key.

Table 10

These five consonants represent the labial sounds (sounds made by the lips).

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation	strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
1 प 2 प 3	प	p	1 फ 2 फ 3	फ	ph
1 ब 2 ब 3 4	ब	b	1 भ 2 भ 3	भ	bh
1 म 2 म 3	म	m			

Exercise 17

Follow the same procedure as for exercise 1.

Table 11

These four consonants represent the semi-vowel sounds (sounds made when air passes through the mouth without any definite articulation).

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation	strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
1 य 2 य 3	य	y	1 र 2 र	र	r
1 2 ल 3 ल	ल	l	1 2 व 3 व	व	v

Exercise 18

Follow the same procedure as for exercise 1.

Exercise 19

Without looking at the tables, give the transliterated equivalents of the following

1	म	4	य	7	फ
2	ल	5	प	8	र
3	ब	6	व	9	भ

Check your answers against the key.

Table 12

These three consonants represent the sibilant sounds (hissing sounds made by forcing air through the mouth with the front of the tongue close to the front teeth).

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation	strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
श	श	s	ष	ष	sh
स	स	s			

Exercise 20

Follow the same procedure as for exercise 1.

Table 13

This consonant represents the aspirate sound (made with a puff of breath).

strokes of the letter	complete letter	trans-liter-ation
ह	ह	h

Exercise 21

Follow the same procedure as for exercise 1.

Exercise 22

Now that you have practised all the consonants, give the transliterated equivalents of the following without looking at the tables.

1 म	6 ख	11 ग	16 क
2 य	7 ब	12 न	17 ध
3 ल	8 व	13 ढ	18 घ
4 स	9 प	14 ट	19 च
5 थ	10 फ	15 ज	20 ह

Check your answers against the key.

Words with consonants

The individual consonant, as a rule, expresses not only the consonant sound, but implies an 'a' sound with it. You will remember that for this reason the vowel अ (a) has no equivalent sign for use with consonants. This means that words can be formed of consonants *only* without using any vowel. Tables 14a and 14b show you how consonants are combined to form words.

Table 14a

letter		letter		word	transliteration	translation
अ	+	ब	=	अब	aba	now
घ	+	र	=	घर	ghara	house
च	+	ल	=	चल	cala	move

Table 14b

letter		letter		letter		word	translation transliteration
क़	+	ल	+	म	=	क़लम	(pen) qalama
स	+	ड़	+	क	=	सड़क	(road) saRaka
म	+	द	+	द	=	मदद	(help) madada

Exercise 23

Practise the combinations in tables 14a and 14b on a separate sheet of paper. Remember to write all the letters of the word first and then add the line along the top from left to right. Do not add a line after writing each individual letter.

Exercise 24

Copy these words on a separate sheet of paper and then give their transliterated equivalents

1 चल
2 गज़
3 वह
4 फल
5 ग़लत
6 पढ़
7 पर
8 सदन
9 सडक
10 हम
11 मदद
12 अब

Check your answers against the key.

Words with consonants and vowels

You will remember that when vowels are combined with consonants, vowel signs are generally used in place of the actual vowel letters (see tables, 4a and 5a), unless the vowel appears at the beginning or at the end of a word.

Table 15

word	practise	word	practise
चाचा		बालक	
दिन		गिन	
बीमार		गाड़ी	
बहुत		धातु	
नमूना		आलू	
ऋतु		ऋण	
नेक		चले	
वैसा		ऐसा	
ओठ		बोल	
कौन		जौं	
बंद		गंदा	
छः		दुःख	

Exercise 25

Practise these words in the spaces provided and then on a separate sheet of paper.

Exercise 26

Break down these words into their individual letters. Where vowel signs are used, give the complete vowel in brackets.

1 ख़ाली 4 लुटेरा 7 झूला

2 बिछाना 5 टोली 8 विभाग

3 फ़ौरन 6 बातचीत 9 ढीला

Check your answers against the key.

Exercise 27

Copy these words on a separate sheet of paper and then transliterate them.

1 बिखेरना 4 बुढ़ा 7 औज़ार

2 बीमार 5 उसको 8 ऊपर

3 कलियाँ 6 निःशब्द 9 इस

Check your answers against the key.

Exercise 28

Read the section on 'conjunct letters' on page **vi** of the Handbook, and then write the following words in Devanagari.

1 **pyaasaa** 3 **miTTii** 5 **pakkaa** 7 **bacca** 9 **kuttaa**

2 **kyaa** 4 **lajjaa** 6 **brahmaNa** 8 **mufta** 10 **dhyaana**

Check your answers against the key.

Words of the Hindi Sounds section

Exercise 29

Listen to a few words on the recording at a time and follow them in the Textbook. Then pronounce them yourself. Now practise writing them. Follow this procedure with small groups of words until you have completed the whole section.

Numerals

Table 16 gives you the Devanagari numerals and their Arabic equivalents 1–10. Combinations, e.g. 16, 123, 1074, are made up in the same way as Arabic numerals.

Table 16

Numerals					
१	1		६	6	
२	2		७	7	
३	3		८	8	
४	4		९	9	
५	5		१०	10	

Exercise 30

Practise writing the numerals in the spaces provided and then on a separate sheet of paper.

Exercise 31

Without looking at the table, give the Devanagari equivalents of the following numerals

1 **6**	5 **2427**	9 **5**	13 **9**
2 **27**	6 **1**	10 **3964**	14 **85**
3 **4**	7 **43**	11 **862**	15 **1689**
4 **169**	8 **3**	12 **2**	16 **0**

Check your answers against the key.

Punctuation

Devanagari punctuation is similar to that used in English, the only difference being a vertical stroke at the end of a sentence where English would use a full stop; no horizontal line is drawn across the top of this stroke.

Final note

If you have completed all the exercises in this book successfully you are now in a position to continue your study of the Course using the Devanagari text, with the romanised version as a check only. Continue to practise writing as you work through the course, and when you listen to the recordings follow the Devanagari text only: you will soon find that you need to refer to the romanised version less and less, until eventually you can dispense with it altogether.

Key

Key to the exercises

Exercise 3

1	a	3	i	5	ri	7	aa
2	ee	4	uu	6	u	8	ii

Exercise 5

1	a	4	i	7	aa	10	uu	13	ii
2	ā	5	H	8	oo	11	u		
3	ri	6	ee	9	ai	12	au		

Exercise 6

1	औ	4	ऋ	7	अ	10	इ	13	अं
2	ई	5	ऊ	8	ए	11	ओ		
3	उ	6	अः	9	ऐ	12	आ		

Exercise 9

1	ा	4	ी	7	ृ	10	ै
2	ँ	5	ि	8	्	11	े
3	ः	6	्	9	़	12	ु

Exercise 10

	Vowel	Sign		Vowel	Sign
1	आ	ा	8	उ	ु
2	ई	ी	9	अं	ं
3	ऋ	ृ	10	ए	े
4	ऐ	ै	11	ऊ	ू
5	ओ	ो	12	अः	ः
6	औ	ौ	13	इ	ि
7	अ				

Exercise 13

1	**k**	3	**–**	5	**j**	7	**ā**	9	**kh**
2	**c**	4	**g**	6	**gh**	8	**ch**	10	**jh**

Exercise 16

1	**RH**	4	**n**	7	**d**	9	**DH**	11	**D**
2	**R**	5	**t**	8	**N**	10	**dh**	12	**th**
3	**T**	6	**TH**						

Exercise 19

1	**m**	3	**b**	5	**p**	7	**ph**	9	**bh**
2	**l**	4	**y**	6	**v**	8	**r**		

Exercise 22

1	**m**	5	**th**	9	**p**	13	**d**	17	**dh**
2	**y**	6	**kh**	10	**ph**	14	**T**	18	**gh**
3	**l**	7	**b**	11	**g**	15	**j**	19	**c**
4	**s**	8	**v**	12	**n**	16	**k**	20	**h**

Exercise 24

1	**cala**	4	**phala**	7	**para**	10	**hama**
2	**gaza**	5	**galata**	8	**sadana**	11	**madada**
3	**vaha**	6	**paRHa**	9	**saRaka**	12	**aba**

Exercise 26

1 ख़ + आ + ल + ईं = ख़ाली

2 ब + इ + छ + आ + न + आ = बिछाना

3 फ़ + औ + र + न = फ़ौरन

4 ल + उ + ट + ए + र + आ = लुटेरा

5 ट + ओ + ल + ई = टोली

6 ब + आ + त + च + ई + त = बातचीत

7 झ + ऊ + ल + आ = झूला

8 व + इ + भ + आ + ग = विभाग

9 ढ + ई + ल + आ = ढीला

Exercise 27

1	**bikheeranaa**	4	**buDHaa**	7	**auzaara**
2	**biimaara**	5	**usakoo**	8	**uupara**
3	**kaliyāā**	6	**niH-S'abda**	9	**isa**

Exercise 28

1 प्यासा 4 लज्जा 7 बच्चा 9 कुत्ता

2 क्या 5 पक्का 8 मुफ़्त 10 ध्यान

3 मट्टी 6 ब्राह्मण

Exercise 31

1 ६ 5 २४२७ 9 ५ 13 १

2 २७ 6 १ 10 ३१६४ 14 ८५

3 ४ 7 ४३ 11 ८६२ 15 १६८१

4 १६१ 8 ३ 12 २ 16 ०

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